

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

All claims have been canceled as follows:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

17 (New). A method for preparing gum arabic having an improved emulsifying ability which comprises a step of heating the gum arabic at a temperature of not less than 60°C in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of 30-100%.

18.(New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the gum arabic is heated in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of 70-100%.

19 (New). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the gum arabic is heated under closed-system constant-humidity conditions.

20 (New). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-100°C and the relative humidity is 30-80%.

21 (New). The method according to Claim 20, wherein the relative humidity is 70-80%.

22 (New). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-150°C, the relative humidity is 80-100%, and further comprising cooling it to a temperature not exceeding room temperature in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of not more than 75%.

23 (New). The method according to Claim 22, wherein the temperature is 60-100°C.

24 (New). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-150°C, and heating is effected in a closed-system atmosphere wherein the relative humidity is 80-100% and further comprising cooling it to room temperature in an open system.

25 (New). The method according to Claim 24, wherein the temperature is 60-100°C.

26 (New). A modified gum arabic obtained by the method according to Claim 17.

27 (New). An emulsifier comprising the gum arabic having an improved emulsifying ability obtained by the method according to Claim 17 as an active ingredient.

28 (New). A method for preparing an emulsion which comprises using the gum arabic having an improved emulsifying ability obtained by the method according to Claim 17 as an emulsifier.

29 (New). A method according to Claim 28 wherein the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oily flavorings, oily colors, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal or vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

30 (New). An emulsion prepared by the method according to Claim 28.

31 (New). The emulsion according to Claim 30 which is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oily flavorings, oily colors, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal or vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.